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Training for Terrorism Prevention and Response

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Chairman King, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Pascrell, Ranking Member Meek and Members of the Committees, thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Before I begin, I want to thank Chairman Cox and Chairman King for visiting New York recently to observe some of our facilities first hand. I would also like to thank them for shepherding through legislation that recently passed in the House. Homeland Security funding must be distributed based upon one criterion, and one criterion only: the risk posed by terrorism. This legislation would move Homeland Security Grant programs in that direction.

In the meantime, I am encouraged that the House Committee on Appropriations has directed that the distribution of State Homeland Security Grants be based upon threat, once a minimum distribution has been allocated to each state. This, too, is a step in the right direction. But I would encourage the Congress to restore the almost \$400 million cut that was made to homeland security money to be made available to state and local governments in the coming year.

To turn to the topic at hand, "Is National Anti-Terrorism Training for First Responders Efficient and Effective?" Certainly, that training has benefited the Police Department's counter-terrorism programs immensely. With the help of the training and expertise offered by the Department of Homeland Security, we have built up a powerful deterrent to terrorism.

While today's hearing is focused on training for first responders, I also believe we need to place equal, if not greater funding emphasis on "first preventers." By that I mean additional resources for the analysts and intelligence operatives who can tip us off to a terrorist attack in the making.

Let me start by providing some context. New York City has been the prime target of terrorists since the early 1990's. In 1993, Islamic militants drove a rental truck packed with explosives into the basement garage of the World Trade Center, intent on bringing down at least one of the towers. The explosion resulted in the loss of innocent life, serious injury and considerable damage to a portion of the tower. Between 1993 and 2001 there were conspiracies to destroy the Holland and Lincoln Tunnels, the George Washington Bridge, the United Nations and the main Federal building in lower Manhattan, as well as a plot to bomb the subway system. The subway plot was foiled at the last minute by the New York City police officers who broke down the door of two Palestinians who were putting the finishing touches on the device. Those conspirators are in federal prison.

After Al Qaeda failed to bring down the Twin Towers in 1993, they waited patiently and tried again eight years later. Their philosophy is to return to the same place over and over, until they accomplish their evil goal. However, the threat did not stop when the two towers of the World Trade Center, and the many other buildings in that complex, came crashing down on September 11th. In February of 2003, an Al Qaeda operative named Iyman Faris was in New York City on a mission to destroy the Brooklyn Bridge. He is the same man who fought alongside Osama Bin Laden, who engaged in a battle which included the wholesale slaughter of Russian prisoners, and who helped supply Al Qaeda fighters with sleeping bags, airline tickets, cash and cell phones. Nearly two years after the destruction of the World Trade Center, Iyman Faris was in New York City conducting surveillance on the bridge. Faris abandoned his plan and reported back to his

handlers that it was not possible to target the bridge because of our increased security measures. He, too, is presently serving time in federal prison.

The highly visible security that the New York City Police Department had in place on the Brooklyn Bridge, in addition to the unseen protection, paid off in the Faris case. Faris was not the last of the militant operatives, however, actively plotting attacks against New York City since September 11th. Shortly before the Republican National Convention last year in New York City, our detectives arrested two, homegrown jihadists who were plotting to attack the Herald Square subway station at 34th Street and Sixth Avenue. We arrested those suspects with the help of a confidential informant we had developed in the community. This heavily traveled, midtown-Manhattan station sits in front of the Macy's flagship store and is also located one block away from the site of the Republican National Convention at Madison Square Garden. These two individuals are awaiting trial.

We continue to put a lot of resources into the field to protect New York against another attack. But in the future, I believe we will require intelligence like we did in the Herald Square case to stop terrorist plots in the making. We need federal funding to support a comprehensive program of intelligence capability that includes both analytical and operational personnel, certainly for the larger U.S. cities that are being targeted. What kind of initiatives would this include?

As is the case with first responder training, we need the federal government's expertise to train qualified intelligence analysts and operatives for the Police Department.

We need that support in the following ways.

One: Sharpening the analysts' skills in conducting link analysis and terrorist group identification.

Two: Improving their ability to identify intelligence gaps faster and hone in quickly on what we need to know. And,

Three: Instruction of our investigative personnel in debriefing skills.

The Police Department, within its limited budget, has already begun to develop these analytical and investigative capacities. For example, we are identifying and monitoring extremists who are willing to perpetrate or provide material support for acts of terror. We have also hired a cadre of trained civilian intelligence analysts to take raw information gathered from informants and undercover agents in the field and translate it into valuable, real-time reporting for our commanders. Again, we are doing all of this out of our own pockets right now. We want to do more of it, and do it better, with the federal government's support and expertise.

Some may question the government's obligation to support these activities, or even the Police Department's right to carry them out. In response, I would draw an analogy to the national fight against the illegal drug trade. With so much ground to cover, local police agencies must play an integral part in supporting the effort to stem the flow of narcotics across national borders and into our cities. That includes the development of undercover drug agents and intelligence specialists. Far from competing with federal counterparts, these local assets are an indispensable force

multiplier. We must take the same multi-pronged approach when it comes to rooting out terrorists.

Our measures include dedicating one thousand police officers exclusively to counter-terrorism duties. We created a new Counter Terrorism Bureau, the first of its kind for a big city police department. We assigned over 250 officers to that Bureau, including the posting of 120 detectives the Joint Terrorist Task Force (JTTF) with the FBI. That compares to 17 detectives assigned to the JTTF on September 11th.

We dramatically expanded the role of our Intelligence Division. We are conducting around-the-clock threat assessments, and integrating this real-time information into daily decisions about where to place resources and personnel. We brought in outstanding individuals from outside the Department to lead our intelligence and counter-terrorism functions. They have decades of CIA, counter terrorism and national security experience.

Drawing upon the unmatched size, experience, and skill of the Police Department's own workforce, we have also expanded upon the foundation laid with Department of Homeland Security (DHS) support to establish one of the premier counter-terrorism training centers in the nation in Brooklyn, which you visited. We staffed that center with police officers who speak Farsi, Urdu, Arabic, and Pashto among other strategic languages. They help us monitor global intelligence. We also hired a cadre of trained civilian analysts to scrutinize and investigate intelligence data. We have established a new intelligence liaison program, assigning New York City detectives to 7 cities in 5 foreign countries to enhance our relationships with the police agencies of other nations.

At home, we are engaged in extensive training, and we are conducting drills on a daily basis. We send our Hercules teams, comprised of specially trained officers with heavy weapons, to make unannounced visits to sensitive locations. They are there to respond to a terrorist incident and to disrupt the kind of surveillance we know Al Qaeda undertakes. We also regularly conduct something we call Sampson drills, involving teams of up to 100 officers at a time, including snipers, who can be dispatched quickly to any given location in the city.

Under Operation Nexus, our detectives meet with small business owners and suppliers who might unwittingly be used to provide material support to terrorists. They include businesses involved in everything from selling construction explosives, to laboratory equipment, scuba gear, and specialized rental equipment. We ask them to report any anomalies in purchases of goods and services. The Police Department has also held briefing sessions for various segments of the public who may come in contact with terrorist plotters. For example, we briefed real estate agents on exactly what Al Qaeda tells its operatives to look for in renting an apartment, and with doormen and building security so that they can more keenly observe their surroundings.

With the commencement of the war in Iraq, we launched a heightened security program called "Operation Atlas" to protect New York City from possible reprisal. Given the ongoing terrorist threat, Operation Atlas remains in place today. It brings together all of the core elements of the Police Department: patrol, specialized units, Counter Terrorism, and our Intelligence Division in a coordinated defense of New York City. Checkpoints are established periodically at key

locations into and out of Manhattan. We have increased our protection of subways and commuter ferries, as well as critical infrastructure.

Looking more closely at our training initiatives: we offer a Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Device Checkpoint (VBIED/CP) course targeted to local, state, and federal law enforcement. This is a four-day course designed to provide both classroom and hands-on instruction concerning vehicle borne explosive recognition. During the first phase of instruction, the student is provided with techniques and methods of proper vehicle inspection during checkpoints at high profile events and/or critical infrastructure locations. The second phase of instruction provides hands-on experience in vehicle searches. Instruction and training includes the various methods of explosive concealment in a variety of vehicles and proper interviewing techniques of occupants of suspicious vehicles. Students learn how to use technology and assets that are presently available.

Our Regional Infrastructure Protection Course (RIPC) is an introductory level course intended to equip members of the law enforcement community with the skills required to deter, detect, and identify potential terrorist activity. This course also introduces the student to the principles of risk assessment (an examination of the vulnerabilities associated with the infrastructure of a facility), basic methods of security, and the major components of a municipality's critical infrastructure.

In addition to classroom instruction, two days of field exercises, which include an actual assessment of a facility, are conducted at the Regional Training Center. After assessing the facility, a written assessment is prepared and the class presents their findings in detail. Subcourses include the Introduction to Terrorism, Theory of Physical Security, Access Control/Biometrics/Closed Circuit Television, Fire Protection Systems, Heating-Ventilation-Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems, Physical Barriers, Utilities, and Marine Terminal and Seaport Security.

On the other end of the spectrum, we offer a one-day Weapons of Mass Destruction Operations Course. This introductory level course is intended to equip members of the law enforcement community with the rudimentary skill-set required to identify, detect, and prevent a terrorist attack involving a weapon of mass destruction. This course also introduces the officer to the concepts associated with operations within a hostile chemical or biological environment that result from a potential release of a weapon of mass destruction by a terrorist or a terrorist organization.

One of the more extensive courses we provide at our Counter Terrorism Division Regional Training Center (RTC) is the Counter Terrorism Investigator's course. This is a five-day investigations level course intended to equip members of the law enforcement community with the skills required to deter, detect, and identify potential terrorist activity, and when necessary, respond to a potential terrorist attack. Our students do not sit in a classroom all day – we provide dynamic field exercises, including simmunitions drills (the use of simulated ammunition that looks, feels and sounds like the “real thing”), an “active shooter” scenario, room clearing, cornering and vehicle stops, which are conducted at our Urban Training Center.

This training is focused on the tactics employed by terrorist organizations so that law enforcement personnel have the tools required to address the threat proactively and safely. It includes courses in Introduction to Terrorism, Domestic Terrorism, International Terrorism, Transnational Crime/Traditional Crimes that Fund Terrorism, Fraudulent Documents, Developing Legal Issues, Weapons of Mass Destruction, Crime Scene Preservation, Improvised Explosive Devices, Suicide Attacks/Truck Bombs, Interview and Interrogation, Introduction to Risk Assessment, Case Development and Enhancement, and Cults/Fundamentalism/Extremist Behavior.

We have provided instruction to our executive level staff including a course in International Terrorism and the Al Qaeda Network. It provides an introduction to the methods used by a terrorist or a terrorist group, specifically focusing on the Al Qaeda network, including the hierarchical structure, an introduction to the methods of training, funding, and gathering intelligence, the operational phases of a terrorist attack, and the process of target selection. This course also examines traditional crimes that have been identified as the means of funding terrorist organizations, including narcotics trafficking, money laundering, currency counterfeiting, tax fraud, coupon fraud, trademark infringement, illegal diamond/mineral smuggling, and kidnapping. Finally, the course examines the behavioral indicators and methodologies associated with the phenomenon of suicide attacks, including self-sacrificing attackers, suicide bombers, and truck bombs. Information obtained from a recent visit by NYPD personnel to Israel is included in the presentation.

We have trained about 34,000 officers in Personal Protective Equipment. Many of those officers have been trained in one or more of our other counterterrorism courses. For example, about 32,000 police officers and supervisors have been trained in the Citywide Incident Management System (CIMS), which conforms with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), and 24,000 have attended our “In-Tac” training.

In addition to our own corps of 37,000 police officers, we have delivered training through our Regional Training Center in Brooklyn to members of the New York City Fire Department; the Metropolitan Transportation Authority Police Department; the New York State Police; the Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester and Rockland County Police; as well as police departments from Connecticut, Maryland, Minnesota, Virginia and even Canada. We train members of the U.S. Coast Guard and the Park Police. We have brought in dozens of private security professionals from hotels, banks, and other institutions to train them in better ways to protect their facilities. In all, over 130,000 training days have been covered in the Regional Training Center.

Additionally, we have leveraged DHS support to expand the protection of critical infrastructure throughout the region. We have created the Threat Reduction and Infrastructure Protection program, or TRIPS, based upon a DHS model, and applied it to New York. We have divided critical infrastructure into 5 categories, and assigned a team of detectives to cover each one. These investigators visit facilities throughout the City and identify any vulnerabilities. To help us conduct these assessments we have enlisted the support of The Cooper Union, one of the foremost schools of engineering in the nation. We meet with their experts routinely to help ensure we devise the most secure solutions possible.

In addition, with DHS support, we have trained close to 12,000 of our officers in more advanced chemical, biological, and radiological response. This critical instruction, otherwise known as COBRA Cohort training, was made possible thanks to close collaboration between the Department and the Office of Domestic Preparedness. As a result, we were able to take immediate steps to better protect New York City from the imminent threat of a terrorist attack involving weapons of mass destruction.

The Department's Regional Training Center, our TRIPS program, and COBRA Cohort training are all prime examples of how we have capitalized on DHS initiatives, adopting and enhancing national training models to fit New York. The result is that New York City has never been better prepared to defend itself from a terrorist threat. Still, all of our preparations come at a steep price: about \$176 million per year to maintain our daily counter-terrorism and intelligence activities. I want to emphasize: these are ongoing operational costs to defend the city, not to mention the reassignment of 1000 police officers to counter-terrorism duties.

One final issue. The Police Department needs the ability to self-certify the training courses we develop internally to meet the needs of a unique urban environment like New York. Self-certification would allow us to save valuable time in delivering vital new training otherwise spent on the DHS grant approval process. I want to emphasize that under self-certification, the Department would continue to work closely with DHS and the Office of Domestic Preparedness in upholding training standards that are second to none. In fact, the precedent already exists in the creation of our advanced, COBRA Cohort Training curriculum.

Defending a vast nation against terrorism is an infinitely complex challenge. Yet it is one the Police Department is perfectly positioned to help our federal government carry out. But we must have adequate resources to do the job. We must have federal funding for first responders and preventers alike, and the authority to expedite their training. And we must hurry.

Thank you again for this opportunity to testify. I look forward to answering your questions.